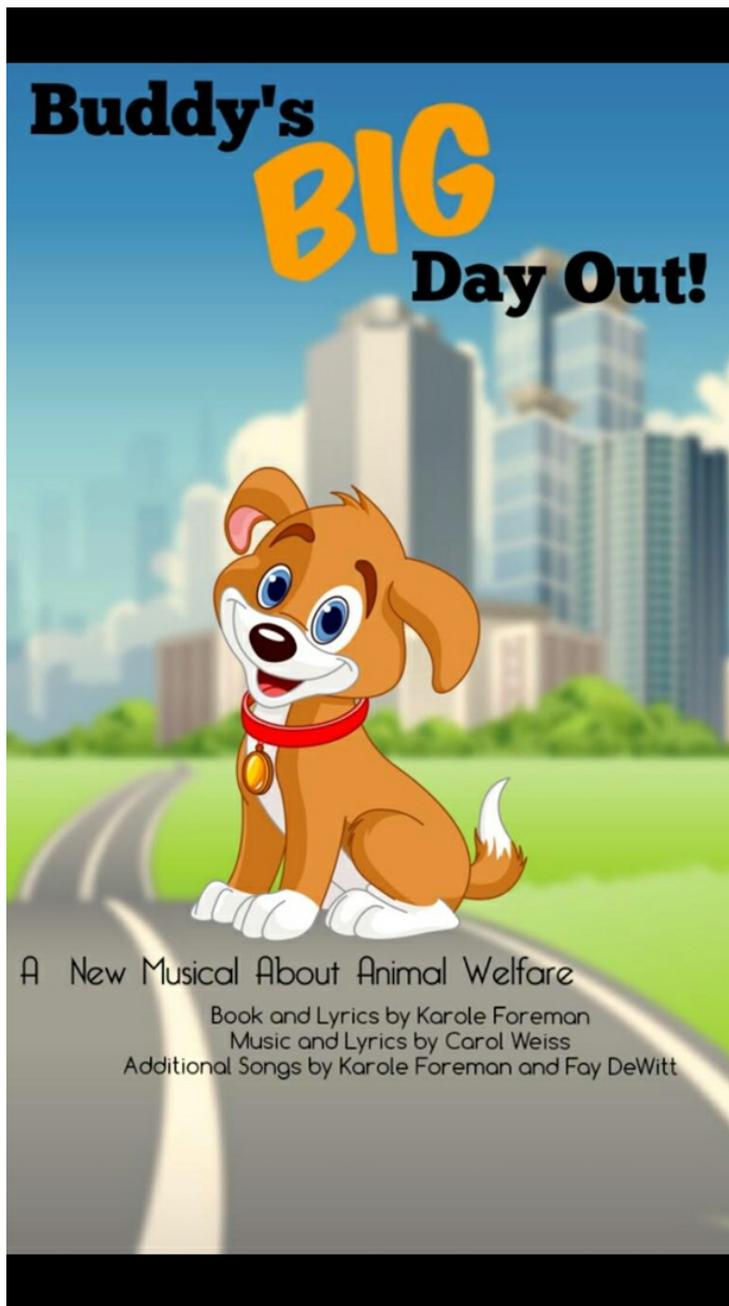




# Buddy's **BIG** Day Out!



A New Musical About Animal Welfare

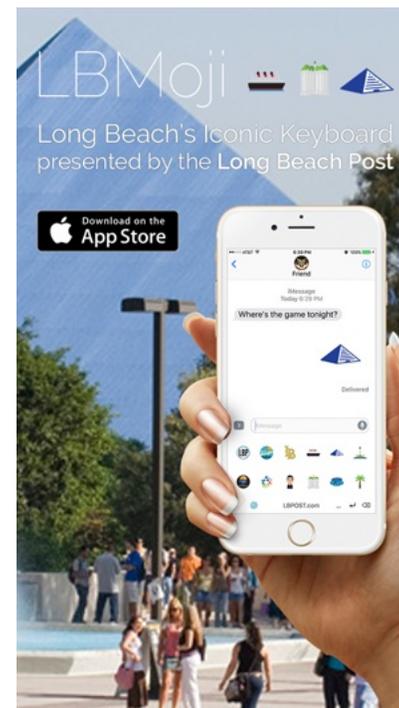
Book and Lyrics by Karole Foreman  
 Music and Lyrics by Carol Weiss  
 Additional Songs by Karole Foreman and Fay DeWitt

By Kate Karp

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*All photos courtesy of The Pet Welfare Project*

This Sunday, *Buddy's Big Day Out!*, an original musical by playwright Karole Foreman and composer Carole Weiss will have its Long Beach opening at California Heights Methodist Church in Long Beach (see graphic at the end of the article for various dates, times and locations). The play is designed for families, and if it delivers on its message, it's well advised for anyone wanting their kids to learn about what homeless, straying animals go through in an entertaining way that won't preach. And this is not to say that grownups won't learn a whole lot, either.

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*Buddy's Big Day Out!* is produced by the Children's Theatre of Long Beach, Sean McMullen and [The Pet Welfare Project](#). The title character is a rambunctious beagle puppy, played by Ari Paltin, who runs away from home. Out in the world he meets Gemma (Kumari Small), a standard poodle who was abandoned by her family when they moved. The two pets are captured and taken to the local shelter, where they meet other lost and abandoned pets. The shelter animals share their stories and teach Buddy and Gemma how important it is for humans to take care of their animal companions and what happens to a pet that ends up on the other side of a forever family.



***Ari Paltin as the irrepressible Buddy.***

“The idea was inspired by a woman I met at an art opening I was attending with my husband,” Foreman said. “She has been an animal activist for years and shared with me her frustration with getting the word out about adoption, spay/neuter, and animal welfare into different communities. There seemed to be a sense of ‘preaching to the choir’ and that perhaps people were becoming indifferent or used to seeing pictures of suffering animals.”

Foreman said that to her, the most natural path to communications is through children —after all, she said, pets are usually brought into families because of kids. She asked the woman if she made any attempts to reach children.

Foreman has an extensive background in acting, writing and teaching. She was the 2008 artist in residence at UCSD’s Thurgood Marshall College and has received grants and awards for her original musical, *The Princess and the Black-Eyed Pea*.

“I also love musical theater and, well, I love a good creative challenge,” Foreman said. “The more we talked, the more inspired I became to attempt to do something to address the issue in my own small way.”

Foreman contacted her longtime friend and colleague Carol Weiss and pitched the idea to her. Weiss is an ASCAP-award-winning composer who wrote songs for American Express as the official entertainment for the 1984 Olympics. Among other achievements, she’s been the musical director for *General Hospital* episodes and has been commissioned to adapt classic stories for children and adults for the stage.

They then gathered a group of fellow animal activists and visual and performing artists and created The Pet Welfare Project.

“That was two years ago, and we are thrilled to be partnering with the Children’s Theatre of Long Beach to bring *Buddy’s Big Day Out!* to share with children and their families here in Long Beach.”

When kids and their parents visit a shelter or a rescue, most of the time they’re taken with the animals themselves and may not know how or why they wound up there. If one of the pets is lucky enough to go home with them, they may learn the general reason for its being in the facility but not the details. Like the poodle Gemma, pets get left behind by their families for a number of reasons and often wind up in shelters. They also are also dumped there in countless litters from unsplayed females, confiscated in animal-cruelty cases, and other unfortunate turns of fate. Unless anyone, child or adult, sees it firsthand, words can be cheap.



***Mao the cat (May Miata) and Gemma the poodle wonder what crime they’ve committed to land them in a cage.***

But enough of my own preaching. Go with your family to see *Buddy’s Big Day Out* and immerse yourselves in the play!

“For me, the combination of entertainment and education is the finest art we can produce,” Weiss said. “That’s what *Buddy’s Big Day Out!* is—a show written from the heart with a vital message, which I hope the audience will find entertaining, full of music and full of fun.”

And after you become involved in the story, you may want to get otherwise involved during real time.

"Buddy's Big Day Out" is directed by Karole Foreman. The cast and crew are as follows:

Buddy: Ari Paltin

Gemma: Kumari Small

Karl: Marquis Ray

Pit Bull Pete: Henry Kelly

Mao: May Miata

Maxi: Jonee Shady

Animal Control Officer: Jen Halbert

Music Director: Owen Lovejoy

Choreographer: Cameron Shim

Stage Manager: Ashley Zachary

# Performances

**June 11th**

**@ 2pm**

**at Cal Heights United Methodist Church  
3759 Orange Ave. Long Beach  
after the blessing of the animals**

**June 15th @ 7pm**

**June 16th @ 7pm**

**June 18th @ 2pm**

**at the Scottish Rite Event Center  
855 Elm St. Long Beach**

## Ticket Pricing

**\$20 General**

**\$15 Senior, Student**

**\$12 Children**

**Tickets available for purchase at  
[Childrenstheatreoflongbeach.org](http://Childrenstheatreoflongbeach.org)**



*Children and dogs are as necessary to the welfare of this country as Wall Street and railroads.*

*~ Harry S. Truman, 33<sup>rd</sup> president of the United States*

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